

## **Security Council Open debate on women, peace and security – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

Statement by Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

### **Austria**

Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having taken the initiative to convene this public debate on women, peace and security. This meeting enables the Security Council to continue the review of the implementation of its landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Let me further thank your delegation for its efforts and leadership resulting in the resolution the Council adopted today.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Deputy-Secretary General Ms. Asha Rose Migiro for her continued leadership and commitment to gender equality and women's participation and thank her for her statement. We are equally grateful for the valuable input of the Special Adviser of the Secretary General Ms. Rachel Mayanja, the Executive Director of UNIFEM Ms. Ines Alberdi and Ms. Asha Hagi Elmi Amin representing the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Let me say at the outset that Austria fully aligns herself with the statement by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union as well as with the statement by Costa Rica on behalf of the Human Security Network.

We welcome the considerable progress made on strengthening the protection pillar of resolution 1325 with the adoption of resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) on sexual violence as well as resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict. Let me express our hope for a quick appointment of the Special Representative requested in resolution 1888. It is our understanding that this new Special Representative on sexual violence in armed conflict will fully take into account the important aspects of prevention on the one hand, and women's participation on the other hand when carrying out his/her mandate. With the expansion of the monitoring and reporting mechanism in resolution 1882 to situations where parties to armed conflict engage in rape and other sexual violence against children, a new SRSG on sexual violence to be appointed pursuant to resolution 1888 (2009) will be crucial.

Progress is however also urgently needed on other pillars of resolution 1325. Austria sees great value in focusing this debate on responding to the needs of women and girls in post conflict situations for sustainable peace and security. Investing in women means investing into the future, and ensuring women's and girls access to education is one of the cornerstones for their empowerment.

No society can afford not to make full use of women's potential contribution to peace-building and post-conflict recovery. Security Council resolution 1325 places women at the heart of the consideration of the issue, not merely as victims but as agents of change and as partners on equal footing in peace negotiations. Nevertheless, women continue to be largely excluded from decision-making processes. We thank UNIFEM for presenting us with a study that clearly demonstrates among others how the wide absence of women from peace negotiations and post-conflict planning processes results in a serious neglect of the needs of women and girls in the phase of early recovery. As a consequence, this negligence imposes serious costs on recovery, undermining efforts to reassert the rule of law and restart the economy. We need to commit ourselves to address women's priorities in a more consistent manner in the daily work of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Austria will continue to advocate to increase the number of women appointed to senior United Nations positions both at Headquarters and in particular field missions. We highly welcome the efforts of the Secretary General in this regard. Having three female SRSGs and six Deputy SRSGs serving in missions in various conflict areas is already a major step ahead. We hope to see this positive trend continue and urge all Special Representatives and Envoys to make full use of the potential of women in peace processes, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We would further request the Secretary General to take concrete steps to enhance efforts by DPKO and DPA to implement resolution 1325, in particular by creating the posts of full-time senior gender advisers in DPA and within DPA's mediation support unit.

Austria is committed to the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000). Our activities are firmly based on a national action plan adopted in August 2007. A working group made up of representatives of all ministries involved and the Austrian Development Agency reports annually to the Council of Ministers on measures undertaken under the action plan. Gender and human rights training have been included more systematically in pre-deployment training of police and

military personnel participating in peacekeeping operations. Together with UNIFEM Austria supports women-networks in the Western Balkans and preparatory work for national action plans in the region.

Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325. This opportunity should be used to define future priorities and to identify how to address the remaining and new challenges in fully implementing resolution 1325 in the future. We are planning to continue our financial contributions to UNIFEM for the implementation of resolution 1325 and also plan to host an expert meeting in Vienna in the first half of 2010.

We welcome the positive reply of the Secretary General to a letter sent by women leaders in August 2008. We are satisfied that he expressed his support for organizing a ministerial-level meeting including then Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik in 2010 to review the implementation of resolution 1325. Austria stands ready to work with the Secretary General and all interested countries and stakeholders to use the 10th anniversary to identify gaps and challenges and to reinforce the commitment of all States, the entire United Nations system and regional organizations to effectively implement the undertakings of resolution 1325 (2000).